

Let us pray,

Lord, remind us that we are never a burden, especially to you.

Give us the courage to be vulnerable.

Amen.

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How many of you have ever felt like a burden?

You don't have to raise your hands, its more rhetorical this time :)

But it is my guess that almost all of us have felt like a burden to someone at some point in our lives.

Sometimes our bodies don't work like they use to, so we need help.

Sometimes our mental health isn't as strong as we would have hoped and we need help.

Sometimes our skills aren't as broad as we would like, and we need help.

Sometimes our time is extremely limited, and we know we just can't do it all.

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For all of us, being a burden is a painful reality that we all have, do or will face.

In today's Gospel story we see Jesus recognizing the burden that this woman is carrying.

Notice, that the woman didn't ask for Jesus to heal her, rather Jesus noticed her burden and from his own will decided to heal her.

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I often pondered why this woman didn't ask Jesus to heal her.

Was it because she didn't think Jesus could or would?

Was it because she didn't want to bother Jesus?

Or was it because for most of her life, especially being a woman in that time period, she was conditioned to be in the shadows and unworthy of being healed?

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I wonder how many people are out there suffering that we know nothing about.

How many people out in the world feel like their lives are worth so little that they don't think anyone wants to hear about their problems.

How many people out in the world find it better to suffer silently, than have the possible prospect of being a burden?

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Jesus told this woman through his acknowledgment and healing of her ailments that she was not a burden.

Jesus, in this act of not only healing but acknowledging her existence, showed those around him that he had not come for just the elite, but the lowly and the unseen.

Jesus in this one act of kindness and generosity, broke down the social norms that held ancient Mesopotamia together.

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Which is why the leader of the synagogue was not happy.

Jesus was challenging the rules that made life great for those on the top.

AKA, him.

Jesus knew that the leader of the synagogue wasn't defending the sabbath, he was defending his own power.

In ancient Mesopotamia, power came in the form of honor and shame, and it was like currency.

You had to take honor from someone else in order to bolster your own.

There was NOT enough of pie to go around, this supply of honor and power was limited!

And Jesus not interested in this worldly understanding of power and honor/shame, constantly crossed the normative lines.

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Most of Jesus' ministry consisted of; Healing the burdened and burdening the powerful.

Did you ever hear the saying that good preaching is suppose to "Comfort the afflicted, and afflict the comfortable"?

Well this Gospel message today is such a perfect example of this dynamic.

In one act, Jesus comforted the afflicted woman, and afflicted the comfortable synagogue leader.

Who knew that healing could cause such a negative response.

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We do this today actually, where we get mad when some people are healed or get something good, and maybe we don't.

We have this built in jealousy tendency to think that because something good happened to those people, it somehow takes away from the good that I have.

How many of us look on social media and see all the things that our friends or colleagues are doing and start to feel bad about ourselves because our lives don't look like their lives?

And most of the time, if we didn't look on social media, we would probably think our lives are ok.

But once we see someone else have a "better" life than us, well its game over.

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My life sucks because I don't have a million dollar home, or I didn't go to Japan for a month, or I don't have a cool luxury car, or what ever we would be jealous over.

I can't believe that I can't be making money right now on the sabbath, but Jesus over there can go and heal someone.

Who does he think he is??

GOD???

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Comparison will always be a thief of joy.

Either by wishing you had more or wishing others had less.

When we make our lives and our successes about what others have and don't have, rather than what we have and what God has given us, we lose sight on what is most important.

The woman who was healed was still a woman in ancient Mesopotamia.

She was still at the bottom of the social ladder, she still would never have the power and riches that a man would have.

And yet, when she noticed she was healed, she immediately started to praise God.

She didn't ask for more, she was just happy to be healed.

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But the leader of the synagogue who had a lot of power and most likely wealth, and I am assuming a fully functioning body, couldn't wait to complain.

And was unable to celebrate in the miracle that had just happened in front of him, because he was too bitter that he had to follow the rules and Jesus apparently didn't have to.

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Share in the joy of others, be open to the burdens of those suffering silently, and be vulnerable and share your burdens with others, or at the very least with God.

We should be like the woman in this story, and see the miracles that are all around us and give thanks to God, even if they aren't happening to us directly.

Let's fight against the desire to be like the leader of the synagogue, where our first reaction to a miracle is bitterness, resentment and jealousy.

And instead, let's choose to be joyful and happy for all miracles and good things in this world, even if they don't affect us directly.

God's love isn't pie, there is enough for everyone.

Amen.